

A seasonable Proposal for the Benefite and Advantage of Women-Servants.

THO Projects of this Nature at first view are generally slighted, yet if it be considered deliberately, how much these Servants are exposed in an ignominious manner, when through Age, Sickness, or Accidents, they are rendered incapable to serve; It will be found to have its due weight, seing it tends not only to prevent the Abuses that are committed by such rigid dealing with Servants, who without their own fault are disabled from working, but also will prove a great Encouragement to Servants to be more faithful and useful in their Service.

It must be a melancholy Prospect, and discouraging for Servants to consider, that by reason of the smallness of their Fees, they cannot in many years put as much to the fore as will maintain them one Month in Sickness, and in case any Accident befall them, they foresee themselves to be undone, which tempts many of them to take unlawful Means to prevent these foreseen evils to the prejudice of their own Soul, and of the interest of those they serve.

And therefore it is unquestionably a Duty that proper Methods be fallen upon to remedy this Evil; In order to which, a very small part of Servants Fees, not exceeding Twelve-pennies of each pound Scots, ought to be collected to begin a Fund for erecting an Hospital for maintaining such Servants, as through Age, Sickness, Infirmitie, or other Accidents are rendered incapable to serve; And it's certain there is no Servant will grudge at this small Proportion, when they know it is to be applyed only to the use foresaid, so much for their Advantage and Encouragement: Neither can it be uneasie or burdensome, the Proportion being so small.

The Advantages that will attend this Undertaking are, 1. It will ease the Place of a Burden that is otherways more than sufficiently burdened already. 2. It will encourage Servants to be dutiful and honest when they foresee a Remedy provided for them in case of distress. 3. It will provoke others to go in to the Example. 4. It will prevent the Uncharitable and Inhumane Ejection of Servants when in distress. 5. When any Servant is advanced to a better Station, she may be provok'd to a charitable Contribution for such a good Work in favours of those that are in the Station she once was in. 6. The Hospital may be under such a Government as may help to take care of the Souls as well as the Bodies of such as come into it, and so prevent the unlawful Means that many take to shun their Misfortune.

Some will alledge that such small Incomes will never make a Fund suitable to the Design, and the collecting thereof will be difficult.

To which it may be answered 1. That many Smalls make a Great. ~~Experience~~ shews that smaller Contributions has produced Funds effectual for such Designs, such as the Contribution of single Servants to their Invalids, Sea-men Servants to their Poor, viz. 8 Pennies per pound of their Wages each Voyage, Journeymen in Incorporations, Carters, Porters, Trone-men, yea even Link-boyes in Edinburgh have such regular Contributions in favours of the Poor of their own Societies, and the condition of Women-servants is much better than several of these forementioned, and their Numbers vastly above any of them. 3. There may be other Funds besides their Fees, out of which these Contributions may be made, such as a part of the legal Pains imposed by Law against Profaneness and Immoralities of Servants, and many People may be induced to give considerable Contributions to such a charitable Work, from a plain Sense of the charitableness and usefulness of the Design. And Lastly, there will be no difficulty in collecting, seing Masters will readily and cheerfully advance the Proportion from the plain Advantage and Prospect they will reap by the designed Project at any time after the Fee falls due, and the Collector may in a shorter time, and with less Trouble gather in the whole, than many of the small Branches of the Towns Revenues are collected; considering, that it will take no great Time or Pain for the Collector or Thesaurer to visite all the Families within the City sometime after Whitsunday and Martinmass, and take up the Names of all the Servants, and those they serve, with the Quantity of their termly Fees, and book the same, which will clear the Quota of the Contribution to be collected.

As to the Government of the said Hospital within the City of Edinburgh, it may be lodged in Eleven or Thirteen Persons chosen out of Masters of Families, Ministers and Town-Council, viz. 9 Masters of Families, one Minister to be chosen out of the general Meetings of the Sessions, and one of the Town Council to be chosen by their Council, with a Thesaurer or Cash-keeper and Collector, &c. besides the foresaid Eleven, the Quorum declared to be 5 or 7, and this Nomination is to be renewed annually, with Power to them to choose their own Preses, or any other more effectual way of Management may be considered upon by the Magistrats, and eight Sessions in case the Project take.